2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

considerable. Even the most stupid or beer-sodden rulers seemed to discuss such matters with authority. The chief always selects his own site for tree-cutting in my experience. I have seen Citimukulu and Lucembe advise women as to whether their millet was ripe enough to reap, and Nkula upbraiding some of his people on two occasions, once for making village beds on unsuitable soil, and at another time for not fencing properly. He turned to me with a look as despairing as that of any white educator, and said: 'Look at them! They are working anyhow (*cibombebombe*). Is not that what hunger does?'[1]

Of their *icalo* as a whole the chiefs also know a great deal. The messengers who go about from village to village to fetch tribute labourers, or the headmen who come on business to the capital, report on conditions. I was amazed in fact to find how much of the conversation in a chief's hut concerned the whole organization of the food-supply, the exact type of soil in such and such a place, or the methods successfully used on it. Comments and criticisms are passed freely. The chief also knows when and where the rivers are in flood, and, in an incredibly short time, how many buck any travelling European has hit or missed. Thus his position at the capital, a place where people constantly come and go, his specialized knowledge of agriculture, and his personal interest in food-production, the latter at present correlated with the whole tribute system, gives the Bemba ruler opportunity to lead and influence the agricultural activities of the whole tribe. This fact may well acquire administrative importance if any new improved system of cultivation is ever discovered for this area.

In his own gardens the chief organizes the biggest labour force that exists in the country. To clear the bush on a large scale (*ukutema pakalamba*) means making a number of gardens in the case of a leading chief.[2] When cutting on a large scale, many gardens are made. For instance, in 1933 Citimukulu made gardens as follows:

Personal *mulasa* gardens: (1 big and 1 medium)	=	3·2	acres (approx.)
Gardens for 16 wives: (11 medium and 35 small)	=	8·5	" "
Gardens for 4 'brides of the relics': (3 medium and 3 small)	=	2·8	" "
Help over gardens for 4 courtiers, 1 blind singer, 2 widowed sisters: (gardens unmeasured)[3]	=	3·5	" "
		18	" "

[1] *Moneni apa! Balebomba cibombebombe. Te nsala?*
[2] This does not happen every year (cf. p. 215).
[3] These gardens were roughly paced round the edges. A big garden means

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

The Ceremony

881 554 443 793 present, but *banacimbusa* are rather wealthier than their fellows owing to the payments they receive, and they carry themselves with considerable dignity and circumstance.

[608] The *nacimbusa* stands in a special relationship to the girl she has initiated throughout her life. She will probably deliver the girl's first child and act as *mbosua*, or special guardian, to the baby.

881 202 576 *The messenger.* In the old days when the exchange of feasts formed a more important part of the ceremony than they do now, the *nacimbusa* was assisted by a woman known as the *nakalamba*, who was employed to invite the guests to the ceremony by rolling on the ground in front of their houses—the Bemba form of obeisance to a chief. They also fetched clay for the pottery and supervised the ritual cooking of the food.

881 584 *The candidates and their bridegrooms.* The initiation candidate is known as the *nacisungu*. As I have said, these girls were usually betrothed before the ceremony, but it was possible to carry out rites in the case of a girl who was not yet affianced. The bridegroom of a betrothed girl takes part in certain of the ceremonies under the title of *shibwinga*, and this term is also extended to the sister or cross-cousin who may replace him in certain parts of the ceremony.

881 593 604 *The relatives.* Other relatives include the girl's parents and her father's sister. The girl's mother is responsible for providing food and beer, and her father's sister is believed to have a special influence over the fertility of her paternal niece and to stand in a special relationship to her. But the ring of relatives is comparatively small. The uxorilocal family is the chief unit involved.

881 533 *The character of the rite.* The chisungu is a popular ceremony involving much dancing and singing. There is a special drum-beat characteristic of chisungu ceremonies which is frequently used at ordinary beer feasts and always used throughout the rite. Drums are beaten inside the initiation hut, and on the dancing space outside, but they are also carried wherever the women go, some miles out into the bush and back again. The singing is accompanied, as always among the Bemba, by the beat of the drums and by the clapping of hands. Some songs are peculiar to the ceremony and are necessary parts of the rite, but some can be sung at other times. All the chisungu dances are of a characteristic type. They

881 535

5:Slaski E-4 (no date) 1950 FQ5 Bemba FQ5
Luapula Peoples

175 Some Tabwa came with the British South African Company, and a group of Nambwe followed the missionaries to Mbereshi. From 1910 until 1922, when the villages returned to their old sites, the river belt had to be evacuated owing to the menace of sleeping sickness. The development of mining in the Katanga and the Copperbelt created a demand for labour and opened a market for the Luapula fish. The expansion of the fish trade organised by Greek refugees in the late 1920s stimulated a new influx of immigrants to the valley, many of them from across the Belgian Congo border. The present Kazembe, Chinyanta Nankula, is the fourteenth holder of the office.

LANGUAGE

197 The various dialects of Bemba (*Shila, Tabwa, Lunga, Aushi, Cinalunda*) spoken in the valley are not necessarily related to the tribal origins of the people. Cinalunda is a Bemba dialect with a slight Kampokolo admixture. The use of *Cilunda*, the language of the western (Congo) Lunda, and of its modified form, *Kampokolo*, (1) has never spread beyond the court circles. Both died out during the nineteenth century and now only survive in the traditional praise-formulae composed for each Kazembe on his accession, and as the drum-language. [202]

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

133 Rapid-free and easily navigable in its lower course, the Luapula flows towards Lake Mweru at an altitude of some 3,000 feet down a flat, trough-like valley in which "sandstones of the Katanga system, granites and other rocks are overlaid by deep soil accumulations". (2) The flat floor of the valley rises steeply to the Chishinga plateau and more gently to the Kundelungu range on the Congo side. The river, in places overgrown by sudd vegetation, carries masses of floating papyrus. Except for a ten-mile stretch at Lukwesa and a four-mile one at Chisenga, its eastern bank is bordered by a belt of permanent swamp widening towards Lake Mweru. Sandbanks and patches of hard land are more in evidence down the western side. The swampy, seasonally flooded margin, up to ten miles wide, is studded with pools and lagoons and intersected by transverse channels giving access to the river from the villages. Flood-plain grasslands are burned in the dry season. The adjacent strip of fertile, alluvial land, not subject to floods, contains practically the whole population of the Rhodesian side. Further east, towards the escarpment, stretches for some twenty miles a bush-covered, almost uninhabited no-man's-land (*mulundu*) well stocked with wild fauna. Slow-flowing streams make their way down the open grassy *dambo* valleys to the Luapula.

132 The climate is of the savannah type with a single rainy season from October-November to April-May. The annual rainfall, lower in the valley than on the sheltering plateau, ranges from 36 inches at Chiengi (which lies on the Lake Mweru basin but outside Kazembe's kingdom) to 46 inches at Johnston Falls. (3) The mean minimum temperature at Chiengi, (the only records available) is 66.4°F. (4)

(1) Valdes, II, pp. 228 and 243.
(2) Trapnell, 1943, p.1.
(3) ibid, p.2.
(4) ibid, p.3.

7:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1940 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

V. The Machinery of Government

Within each district there are a series of officials, messengers, &c., who carry out the activities of government and the different forms of ritual on which the chief's power depends. Some of these are personal followers of the chief promoted by him for their special loyalty (e.g. the *bafilolo*, *basano*), while others are hereditary officials who are more independent of their ruler's favour (e.g. *bafilolo* and *bafingo*). All these different dignitaries can be classed under various functional heads, i.e.:

(*a*) *Administrative.* These include the executive officials in charge of business in the *umusumba* and those responsible for carrying out the chief's orders in the *icalo* at large. Within the capital the most important are the heads of divisions (*bafilolo*), who are appointed from among the chief's personal friends. These are charged with keeping the peace of the village, organizing the tribute labour from the capital, allotting land for cultivation, which is often necessary in the bigger settlements, arranging hospitality for visitors—an important task at the capital—and acting as a panel of advisers on all occasions (cf. 'Judicial', below). Besides these elder men, there are at the *umusumba* a number of courtiers and in the old days young men (*bakalume ba mfumu*). Young boys, often members of the royal clan, were, and still occasionally are, sent to court to be educated there, and some families remain as courtiers for several generations apparently. All these act as messengers, attendants, and in the old days took duty as executioners.

As regards the country at large, the main difficulty was keeping in touch with the scattered villages. The Bemba have no general meeting like the *pitso* of the Sotho peoples or the *libandla* of the Nguni. For the chief's orders to be conveyed to his villages, messengers have to go to and fro. Other officers are required to recruit the tribute labourers and to demand beer or produce for the chief, and to apprehend criminals. Since some villages are sixty miles or so from the capital, an enormous amount of time is spent in coming and going in this way and even with the introduction of the bicycle a great many messengers of one sort or another are still required. In the old days courtiers and younger relatives of the chief acted in this capacity. Nowadays they have anything from four to

7:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1940 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

twelve uniformed messengers, *kapasus*, and for the rest they go short of service.

(*b*) *Military*. There was no general military organization in this tribe, but attached to each big court were one or two captains (*bashika*). Some of these were hereditary, with ritual functions connected with war magic, and others appointed at the chief's will. They now act as specially trusted messengers.

(*c*) *Judicial*. There is no fixed composition to a Bemba court, although its procedure is laid down by custom. At a small chief's court, the elderly men of the village attend, while the *bafilolo* act as advisers at the big *imisumba*. Cases go on appeal from sub-chief to chief, chief to paramount, and in the event of a case of extreme difficulty presenting itself, the Citimukulu can summon from their villages some of his hereditary priests or councillors, the *bakabilo* (cf. below). Witnesses are brought by each party to a case and are marshalled by the *bafilolo*. The senior man present claps as each point is made to mark the recognition of the court, and the chief himself finally sums up and gives judgement. The advisers speak when asked a point of precedent or law, and influence the chief's final decision by black looks or alternatively enthusiastic clappings of the hand.

(*d*) *Advisory*. There is no council or meeting of all the adult men of the tribe for special occasions, as among many Southern Bantu. Sub-chiefs have a panel of village elders and relatives to advise them, while the biggest territorial chiefs have hereditary officials who combine political and judicial with ritual functions. In the case of the paramount, these officials—the *bakabilo*—number between thirty-five and forty and form an advisory council on special matters of State. The *bakabilo* have been described as having descent as long as that of the chief himself in many cases and possess sacred relics in their own rights. The power of these relics is so strong that the Citimukulu is not permitted to pass through their villages for fear that one chieftainship should harm the other. *Bakabilo* are immune from tribute, wore special feather head-dresses in the old days, and even now claim special respect equal to that given to a chief when travelling about the country. They call themselves *Fwe Babemba* ('We, the Babemba'), may not leave the central territory (Lubemba) for long, must be buried within the royal district, and keep sex taboos similar to those of the chiefs. They succeed by a special accession

7:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1940 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

the old days are an example. The big tribal councils of most of the African peoples described as being attended by 'every one' and in reality very large meetings, must also act as occasions when the loyalty of the tribe is fostered. Among the Bemba much of the tribal ritual is secret, as has been shown, and the advisory council is composed of what might be called an aristocratic caste. If the *bakabilo* meet in sitting on the open ground in the capital, as I have seen happen, they use archaic language on purpose, so that the common people cannot understand. It is no occasion for high-flown oratory or any of the demagogue's arts. On the other hand, the Bemba chiefs were formerly considered very nearly divine, and the belief in their supernatural powers is still strong enough to integrate the tribe. The sacredness of the royal ceremonial largely depends on its secrecy and the fact that only persons of the right descent can take their part in the ritual. The ordinary people do not attend the ceremonies except in the case of some inhabitants of the capital, but they value their secret nature and speak contemptuously of the Bisa and neighbouring tribes with less complex rites. The number of the *bakabilo*, each scattered through the chief's *icalo* and each with his own ritual function, sometimes secret from his own fellows, also adds to the strength of the whole ceremonial system. Each is insistent that *his* part is absolutely essential to the welfare of the tribe, and his own village is convinced to that effect, too. Another integrating factor is the belief in royal descent and presence in the society of such a large number of men and women who claim chiefly rank. These are dispersed all over the country, generally in charge of villages, and they naturally support the chiefs from whom they derive their power.

As regards the activities of the different *ifyalo*, it has been seen that these are self-contained units and there is no regular provision for regular meetings of *icalo* heads. They are linked by the overlordship of the paramount, who acts as judge of their court of appeal, and the different tiny states are bound together because of the close relationship between their different chiefs. Messengers constantly go from one court to another to inquire after family matters, the children of one chief are sent to be brought up at the capital of another, the chiefs themselves take office first in one *icalo* and then another, and even the Citimukulu takes no important step, ritual or political, without consulting his 'brothers', the big territorial heads.